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Dream Nets



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As an art lover and supporter of green technologies, the promotion of Dream Nets, and the creator Sarah Jefferson intrigued me. We surveyed land for potential ziplines across a canyon. In between baby time, gardening and hiking to the car, we talked about the outcomes of recreation and community building for the growth of her art, weaving tree canopy nets.

Tell us about your first net.

It was at the national Rainbow gathering in Michigan, took all these supplies out into the woods, it was the most slack net. We hand built a ladder out of branches to get into the trees. It was in between four birch trees. A few years ago I met a kid who was conceived in that net.

What are your favorite spots for making nets and where do you see your nets being used?

Each tree or set of trees, speaks, I just look for the sweet spot that the trees want the net to be in. They define themselves, alot of times. I am tying the trees together and the net shape presents itself to me. Taking the cues from the trees.

So its a process...

I like the nets, the unexpected net in a hide-a-hole, or a random cliffside, that speaks adventure. My favorite was two and a half feet off the ground, super easy to get into, super small and just cozy. Its nice when you don't have to worry about handrails to contain the children, or deathfalls from drunken hippies. You walk away from your art and expect that it will take its own course as far as weatherization and breaking itself in, but there's always some worry about the effect of people use.

What functions have your nets served?

There is the hammock, tree climbing, zipline, playground design, adventure platforms, also I think bird watching is a feasible use. I'd like to build more off a treehouse deck. Also I dream about a rock climbing net that incorporates the rock face. I am dying to bring the net/hammock, solar powered waterslide.

Who are your influences, who do you respect?

Roderick Romero and his "Nest at Encantado", I like his treehouses because they appear like multimedia, with weaving and installation art. I am inspired by Pete Nelson, another treehouse builder. His whole family, they are so upbeat, and encouraging. They are my connection to inspiration. Another one of my favorites is the Japanese builder Taka (Kobayashi Takashi). We have stayed at Fall City, WA, Treehouse Point.

Jon and I stayed in the Trillium Treehouse. There is something about a spiral staircase that goes up a tree. I took him out there to meet my treehouse family and see a big net. His jaw was on the ground. I knew in the net that I had got him.

What impact does a net have on the forest, or the trees? How sustainable are they?

Generally, my nets are about 60% - 80% recycled materials on average. I don't generally pierce the tree or wrap around the tree to cut off circulation. They will after a dozen years show signs the rope has been there. They come down easily with a lifetime of around the 10 - 20 year mark. They are temporary and can be removed.

Dream Nets

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How can someone contact you for building a net as a tool in their yard for relaxing, or as a traveling campground feature?

Try the Facebook page at the end of this article... or look out for a future website fully devoted to building DreamNets.

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